

Indiana House of Representatives

News and Information

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

December 27, 2005

TINCHER: PUBLIC NEEDS TO WEIGH IN ON PROPOSED WOOD BURNING RULE

INDIANAPOLIS – State Rep. Vern Tinchler (D-Riley) said area residents have only a few days left to comment on a proposed Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) rule that would drastically restrict the use of outdoor furnaces that burn wood or corn.

"With very little advance warning, IDEM has indicated it wants to develop new rules regulating emissions from outdoor furnaces and boilers," Tinchler said. "The period set aside for public comment on these new rules ends the first week in January, so I want to make sure the people who live in this area are aware of what is being proposed."

Tinchler said the proposed rules are designed to curb the use of outdoor furnaces, which are not regulated at either the state or federal level. IDEM officials appear to want to restrict usage because of complaints that the furnaces generate smoke and pollute the air.

"Many homeowners choose to use these furnaces to burn wood or corn because they simply cannot afford to pay for gas or oil heating," Tinchler said. "By using wood or corn, people are able to heat their homes at a substantially lower cost, which is important during colder winters, like the one we're in right now."

"From my experience and discussions with other people, I have not seen any proof that the smoke generated by these outdoor furnaces is substantially worse than other types of smoke that are put into the air," he continued. "At the very least, the matter should be discussed in more depth before enacting a rule that will end up raising heating bills. There are many people who are suspicious that this effort is being advanced by utility companies who fear competition that is taking money out of their pockets."

Those who wish to register their feelings about the proposal should send a letter to:

Department of Environmental Management and Air Quality
Attn.: Mr. Sean Gorman
100 North Senate
IGCN 1001
Indianapolis, IN 46204

"The deadline for sending in a comment is January 3, 2006," Tinchler said. "Considering the impact this proposed rule will have on the lives of many homeowners in this area, I think it is important to register your feelings in a timely matter. I think IDEM needs to know that this proposal may cause severe financial hardship for many people, and deserves extensive study before being put into place."

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This news release can be accessed on the Internet at www.IN.gov/H46